2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

But to convey a clear understanding of the relations between the tribes which will be mentioned in the ensuing pages, it is as well here briefly to distinguish them. In the various maps and accounts of Patagonia extant, numerous tribes, with different names, are marked and recorded. These accounts, so far as my observations enable me to judge, have arisen from the custom of parties of the tribe combining to travel or fight under the leadership of a particular chief, and being described by themselves, when met with, by his name. I have been enabled to recognise thus the Moluches, who were so called from Malechou, a hereditary chief of that name; and the celebrated chief Lenketrou united under the leadership men of several tribes, and is said to have commanded 1,500 men in his great raid on the Rio Negro settlements. There are now between the Rio Negro [16] and the Straits about 500 fighting men, giving at a rough estimate a population of about 3,000. The Tehuelches, or Patagonians proper, exclusive of the Foot Indians of Tierra del Fuego—who are distinct, though they may be of the same original stock—are divided into two great tribes, the Northern and Southern. They speak the same language, but [17] are distinguishable by difference of accent, and the Southern men appear to be, on an average, taller and finer men, and are more expert hunters with the bolas. The Northern range chiefly over the district between the Cordillera and the sea; from the Rio Negro on the north to the Chupat, occasionally descending as far as the Santa Cruz River. The Southern occupy the country south of the Santa Cruz, and migrate as far as Punta Arena. The two divisions, however, are much intermixed and frequently intermarry; always, notwithstanding, preserving their clannish division, and taking opposite sides in the frequent quarrels. Our party was composed in almost equal parts of both Northern and Southern, and one inmate of our toldo was a Southern named Hummums, a brother of Mrs. Orkeke. From the Rio Negro as far as the Chupat, another tribe, speaking a different language, is met

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

in one, which came under my own observation, beyond all doubt, death was caused by poisoning the inside of a potro boot, the wearer of which had a slight wound on the leg. 278

Inquirers into the Tsoneca language are referred to the vocabulary in the Appendix; but it is needful to state most distinctly that it is altogether different from either Pampa or Araucanian. Though able to converse in Tehuelche, I could not at all understand the Pampas; and this is noted with reference to statements made in M. Guinnard's work, which, coupled with other internal evidences already alluded to, compel me to doubt that the author was ever in the hands of the real Patagonians, his captors and masters being Pampas or Araucanos, whose customs are well described by him. 197

As distinguished from these Indians, the number of the pure Tehuelches, both northern and southern, in Patagonia does not exceed 1,500 men, women, and children, according to the returns of effective warriors given at the time when the union of all the various parties, combined during my journey for political purposes, enabled me to compute them with exactness. Beyond the two great divisions into northern and southern, the subdivisions of tribes, so frequently given, are imaginary, or arise out of names of temporary leaders. Nor is the term clan very appropriate to the nomad parties, combined by custom or often by chance. The population is steadily and rapidly decreasing, and the inroads of disease and ill effects of liquor are, as usual, doing the work of extirpation of this race. 161

As to their organization, it must be distinctly understood that these Indians owe no manner of allegiance to any head cacique, such as Calficura, or any other, though they may agree to obey one chief, as for instance, Casimiro; nor are they, except by intermarriage or voluntary association, politically united with either Pampas or Araucanians. Their natural bias is to independence, and rather insubordinate ideas of 'one man being as good as another.' Cuastro's dying 621 622